Business Plan

2017–2018

Department of Environment

NOVA SCOTIA

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Budget 2017–2018: Business Plans

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Message from the Minister

As Minister of Nova Scotia Environment, I am pleased to present our 2017-18 Business Plan that will further advance our work to protect the environment, human health and animal health.

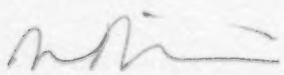
The plan describes our planned progress for the coming year, with a focus on four key areas that will guide our work. Our priorities in 2017-18 will include regulatory excellence, client-focused service delivery, improvements in program and risk management, and a greater emphasis on education, compliance, inspection, and enforcement.

As part of this work, we will continue to make ongoing improvements to our regulatory compliance practices to ensure that we are effectively managing risks to the environment and human and animal health. As a key regulator in Nova Scotia, we are committed to addressing the needs of our clients by taking the steps needed to ensure that the regulations in place are necessary, predictable, consistent and transparent.

A review of the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act will take place in 2017. The Act recognizes the important linkages between economy and environment and will be reviewed by the Minister's Round Table on the Environment and Sustainable Prosperity. I look forward to receiving the recommendations of the Round Table as it completes its second five-year review of the Act with a focus on the importance of a greener economy.

Other priorities for the department in the coming fiscal year include working with other departments to officially protect (designate) additional lands and further reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A key part of this latter work is the department's ongoing leadership role in developing Nova Scotia's Cap and Trade Program. The proposed program will enable us to build on the province's success to date in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the province while protecting the pocketbooks of Nova Scotians.

Sincerely,



Honourable Margaret Miller

Minister of Environment

Vision

A leader in regulatory excellence, conservation, partnership and promotion, we protect the environment, human health and animal health.

Mandate (taken from the December 2015 Mandate Letter)

- Ensure the integration of green economy objectives with shared economic goals.
- Lead preparation for the 2017 review of the Environmental Goals and Sustainability Prosperity Act (EGSPA).
- Continued to advance a best-in-class inspection and enforcement division.
- With Natural Resources, achieve the EGSPA goal of 12 percent protected land by December 31, 2015. Achieve an additional one percent, primarily through the addition of parcels with no negative recreational or economic effects.
- Work with departments (including Finance and Treasury Board and Energy) to coordinate provincial efforts to ensure Nova Scotia meets its commitments to reduce greenhouse gases and prepare for impacts of climate change.

Core functions of the department

- Develop programs and deliver services to enhance the protection of the environment, human, and animal health
- Develop legislation, regulations and policies based on sound scientific knowledge and expertise
- Educate, inspect and enforce to ensure compliance with legislation and regulations
- Proactively respond to environmental, animal, and human health risks
- Process notifications, applications, and approvals for regulated activities

Goals to achieve mandate/core functions

While carrying out its mandate and core responsibilities, NSE will focus on four priorities for fiscal 2017-2018 that are important to Nova Scotians:

1. Education, Compliance, Inspection, and Enforcement;
2. Program and Risk Management;
3. Client-Focused Service Delivery; and
4. Regulatory Excellence

Detail on each of these goals is provided below in terms of planned activities and initiatives that will be undertaken by NSE in 2017-18, as well the planned approach to measuring success in each of these areas. Other efforts to support each of these goals will be reported on in the

2017-18 Accountability Report to further demonstrate our successes in ensuring the environment, human health and animal health are protected.

Goal 1: Education, Compliance, Inspection, and Enforcement

NSE has responsibility for many regulatory programs in Nova Scotia. In 2015 additional regulatory responsibilities were transferred to NSE in the areas of natural resources, public health and farm animal welfare. This was undertaken to create a best in class inspectorate by separating sector development from regulatory oversight.

Excellence in regulatory programming is supported by continued efforts to improve education, compliance, inspection and enforcement, positioning NSE to become a best in class inspectorate by:

- Having an informed, professional and competent workforce that can recognize and apply the right level of response to an action
- Ensuring consistent compliance with the legislation and regulations that NSE enforces
- Identifying efficiencies through continued adaptation and integration of compliance functions

Priorities/Activities for 2017-18

- Continue to work with our partner departments in considering all aspects of compliance integration that include agreements, structure and logistics to deliver consistent and effective compliance, inspection and enforcement services.

Planned approach to measure progress, impact and success

1. Agreements are in place with partner departments to ensure seamless delivery of compliance, inspection and enforcement services.
2. Increased proportion of inspections focused on high risk activities in tandem with decreased time spent on low-risk activities.

Goal 2: Program and Risk Management

Nova Scotia Environment is responsible for managing several program areas, and it is important for the department to work towards continuously improving our programs to ensure they adequately manage risks.

Work under this goal will help ensure that programs manage risks to an acceptable level and deliver desired benefits through:

- Resources and efforts that are continuously aligned with program needs on a risk basis
- Ensuring programs are well-structured and meet intended outcomes, while focusing on continuous improvement

Priorities/Activities for 2017-18

- Implementation of a risk based inspection program for NSE to focus inspection resources on those regulated entities that pose the greatest risks to environment, human and animal health.
- Assessing programs to ensure they are optimized and potential improvements are identified

Planned approach to measure progress, impact and success

1. Incorporation of programs into the activity tracking system, along with increased staff training, and ensuring audit frequency determined based on risk-based analysis
2. Programs improvements are identified and wherever possible made based on assessment

Goal 3: Client-Focused Service Delivery

NSE will aim to improve service delivery to department clients through:

- Regulations that are clear and easy to understand.
- Evidence-based decisions that are delivered in an open and transparent manner.

Priorities/Activities for 2017-18

- Implement a System for Notification and Approval Processing (SNAP) to improve consistency, efficiency and transparency, as well as offer on-line services to clients for Environment and Public Health functions.
- Introduce consolidated training for staff to improve client service

Planned approach to measure progress, impact and success

1. Percentage of clients using the new on-line system (SNAP)
2. Number of Approvals available online and accessible by the public
3. Number of Approval related correspondence delivered electronically
4. Evaluation of onsite and watercourse alteration programs to support further use of notification as a regulatory tool

Goal 4: Regulatory Excellence

NSE will continue its work of reviewing and modernizing environmental regulations, while collaborating with the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness, wherever appropriate, to reduce regulatory burden.

Our work under this goal will help ensure necessary regulations are predictable, transparent, and protect our health, safety and environment by:

- Modernizing regulations and reducing regulatory burden where appropriate to eliminate barriers to private sector growth and productivity
- Measuring results to ensure outcomes are met

Priorities/Activities for 2017-18

- Lead the legislated 2017 review of EGSPA.
- Continue to work towards the goals in EGSPA for which NSE is responsible.
- Support the integration of greener economy objectives with shared economic goals.
- Work with the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness to evaluate impacts to business from our regulations

Planned approach to measure progress, impact and success

1. The second five-year review of EGSPA is completed by end of calendar year 2017
2. Goals are either achieved, maintained and/or substantive progress made towards achievement of intent and timelines outlined in EGSPA
3. Improvements in government's efforts to advance the green economy
4. Regulatory management that aligns with the Premier's Charter of Governing Principles for Regulation

Collaboration and Partnerships

In addition to the four goals identified above, NSE will also undertake significant and important work in collaboration with key partners to advance shared interests and responsibilities. Over 2016-17, NSE will:

- Work with our federal partner, Environment and Climate Change Canada, to develop and implement a cap and trade system to reduce greenhouse gases emissions;
- Work with the Department of Natural Resources to move towards 13 per cent protected land across the province, provided there are no negative recreational or economic effects;
- Continue to work collaboratively with the resource departments on public participation activities.

Financial Summary

Departmental Expenses Summary
($ thousands)

Programs and Services	2016-2017 Estimate	2016-2017 Forecast	2017-2018 Estimate
Administration	884	836	855
Policy	5,329	5,148	5,275
Inspection, Compliance and Enforcement	21,116	21,309	20,900
Sustainability and Applied Science	9,471	9,282	10,209
Total - Departmental Expenses	36,800	36,575	37,239
Ordinary Recoveries	—	130	100
Funded Staff (# of FTEs)			
Department Funded Staff	354.8	331.8	355.3

Note:
For Ordinary Revenues, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 2
For TCA Purchase Requirements, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 1